

Observations on House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service Hearing, 29 April 1960, in re Pay Legislation.

(Present: Messrs. Murray, Morrison, Davis, Lesinski, Porter, Dulski, Foley, Irwin, Oliver, Rees, Corbett, Gross, Johansen, Cunningham, Wallhauser, Mrs. St. George)

Examination of the witness purported to reference his testimony on the previous day. Patently it frequently addressed itself to conclusions or inferences by the Committee members.

Mr. Lesinski charged an implication of low quality of postal workers, which was flatly denied by the Postmaster General. Taking over the questioning, Mr. Porter exacted an admission from Mr. Summerfield that he believes there are some postal workers who may be overpaid. Mr. Porter asked whether in point of fact the PMG is not basing opposition on deficit increase, which the witness denied is the first consideration.

On the subject of responsibility for delay Mr. Lesinski and Mr. Porter on the one hand and the PMG on the other differed sharply, the latter blaming Congress while the members laid the blame on the Executive arm.

Mr. Corbett asked whether Mr. Summerfield would favor retroactive increases if the BLS study when issued shows they would have been justified at an earlier date than can then be met. The witness declined to answer saying he felt too many other factors would enter into any such decision. Mr. Morrison led from this to the general history of Post Office Department opposition to pay increases, and to the firm opposition to the increases proposed by H. R. 9883, asking whether Mr. Summerfield would agree to a 10% increase (or 7½%; or 3%; or even 1%). The witness pleaded that he could not answer, since he had come to testify only on the bill being considered and lacks necessary data for discussion of any other level of increase.

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Further sharp disagreement evolved when Mr. Porter objected to the witness' use of the terms "callous manipulation" (of Federal workers) and "cruel hoax" (referring to false hope for large increases), both allusions being to the PMG's prior testimony. The witness refused to retract the terms, and showed further temper when Mr. Irwin sought to equate the proposed increases with the steel strike settlement terms. At this point Mr. Morrison introduced into the record a telegram from the AFL denying previous testimony that steel benefits were to become effective only at the close of this calendar year.

Following further discussion of the desirability of awaiting the BLS study, Mr. Murray announced that he is personally opposed to any increase whatsoever at this time.

Mr. Murray then introduced into the record a letter from the National Association of Manufacturers opposing increases, following which he adjourned the public hearings.

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WITNESSES FOR PAY INCREASE LEGISLATION -- FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 1960.

COMPLETION OF TESTIMONY BY --

HONORABLE ARTHUR E. SUMMERFIELD, The Postmaster General

accompanied by --

Honorable Frank Barr, Assistant Postmaster General,
Bureau of Personnel

Honorable Herbert Warburton, General Counsel

Honorable Lindsley Noble, Deputy Assistant Postmaster General,
Bureau of Finance